GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2556
ANSWERED ON:08.08.2000
FIRE MISHAPS IN COAL MINES OF BIHAR
ARUN KUMAR

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether several mines at Dhanbad and Bokaro in Bihar are engulfed in fire for many years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any danger to the life of common people on this account;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to extinguish the fire?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COAL (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM)

(a) to (d) : Yes Sir. Fire exists in few coal mines of Jharia coalfields for many years. Fire also exists in Kargali opencast and Bokaro opencast mines of Bokaro. In Jharia Coalfields, the number offires identified in an estimate carried out after nationalisation of coal mines was 70 and the area covered by the fires was 17 Sq. Km. Coal seam were affected in 49 collieries. In Jharia Coalfields, the surface land has been affected by fires and there is danger of subsidence of the surface land. In Bokaro and Kargali OC mines the fire exists in coal seams in the working quarries and there is no danger to life of common people.

(e) : The problem of fire in Jharia coalfield has been receiving the Government's attention since Nationalisation, 22 fires projects were prepared since 1975 to 1988 for dealing with the fires. Dealing with these fires have been extremely difficult on account of the complex geo-mining conditions and the extensive habitation over the coalfield. Despite the complex situation, the efforts made by BCCL has been successful to a large extent with the reduction of surface area affected by fires by 40% (9 Sq. Km.) and liquidation of 10 fires.

Two international consultants were appointed for preparing a Fire Fighting Programme and an Environmental Management Plan for the Jharia Coalfielss Fire (JCF).The dia-gnostic studies for the fire fighting programme has been completed. The Environment Monitoring Plan for JCF has also been prepared.

A High Level Committee was constituted by the Govt. of India under the Chairmanship of Secretary(Coal) to look into the problems of fire and subsidence in Raniganj and Jharia Coalfields and suggest mitigative measures and submitted its report in Jan. 1998. The recommendations of the committee are under implementation.

A Master Plan has been formulated by CMPDIL for dealing with the problem of Fires, Subsidence control and rehabilitation of people from endangered and other coal bearing areas.